

## The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

### Ohio State Engineer

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# The Engineer's Bookshelf . . .

By WILSON R. DUMBLE

THIS month the janitor of *The Bookshelf* is proud to publish a review written by a member of his A. S. T. English class, Term I. The review of Mrs. Rackham Holt's biography of George Washington Carver was written in lieu of a regular class assignment by Pvt. Elliott H. Donnels, Co. K. Pvt. Donnels, a native of New Orleans, La., has been a member of the Armed Forces for fourteen months. Before his Army service he was enrolled for a year and a half in the College of Liberal Arts at Mars Hill, North Carolina.

Reviews from other enlisted men on the Ohio State campus will be published in *The Bookshelf* in succeeding months.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

By RACKHAM HOLT

Reviewed by

ELLIOTT DONNELLS

Here is the first published biography of George Washington Carver, scientist and humanitarian. It is the story of a venturesome man who, after finding his place in the sun, devoted himself to his race and to the world; the account traces his life from that of a sickly child on a Missouri farm and that of an eager, young man with a zest for learning up to his life as the renowned scientist. The account is delightful yet poignant; it abounds with inspiration and applicable remonstrance; over-all it bears the irreplaceable charm of the man himself. His quietness, his purposefulness, and his kindly spirit are here, captured, so to speak, by Mrs. Holt who came away influenced and inspired by his noble character.

As a child Carver was a frail, little fellow. Oftentimes he would amuse himself by playing with the flowers near the cabin. When he was not busy with his chores—though sickly he was required to do his share—he would disappear into the bushes where he had a "secret garden." It was here that he would cure all the seriously ill plants which he had gathered throughout the neighborhood. And because he did cure all that he took with him he was dubbed the "little plant doctor."

Even though he had "this magic way of growing things," he could not understand why he had a green thumb nor why he was able to do so many things after having seen them done once. Still he knew that however many things there were that were mysteries to him somehow they

could be explained. He yearned to know the explanations. Moses Carver, George's "uncle" and the owner of his mother, saw the keenness of the lad and readily permitted him to go to school.

To go to school was more than a phrase to George. School meant privation and uncertainty. Always he had to venture out alone, but once started he would go on, making friends and establishing his reputation. For instance, when he first started school it was necessary that he travel to Neosho, a city eight miles away. Wide-eyed with expectancy but penniless he trudged over the countryside, finally reaching the city, his body weary and his eyes heavy with sleep. There being no one there whom he knew, he did not know of any place to rest or to sleep. After wandering aimlessly through the streets he came upon a barn where he decided he would spend the night. The next morning the owner, Mariah Watkins, found and immediately befriended him. Then began an invaluable friendship. It was she who set firmly the mold of "thrift, industry, and self-reliance." It was she, too, who instilled the life-long devotion he had to the Word of God.

Not always was George to find people kind and considerate. After he had learned all he could at grade school he tried to go on to college. His first attempt to enter proved discouraging; for, applying for matriculation, he was met with the curt rebuff, "We don't take niggers here!" He felt the full impact of such an unfair prejudice and went away disheartened. His ambition ebbed and his courage seemed to simmer down to a faint spark.

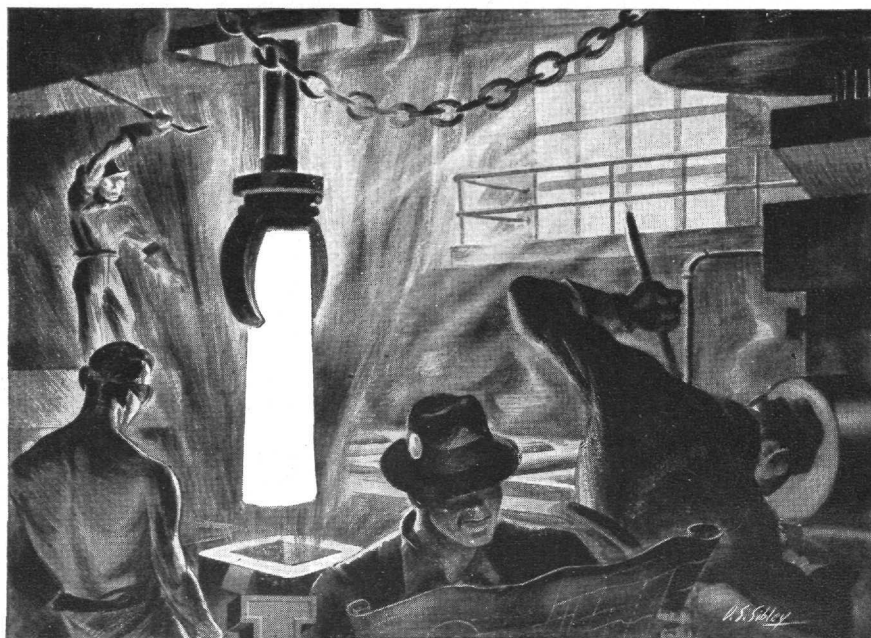
His ambition nevertheless was to bubble forth again when he met the Milhollands who, after knowing him for a short time, were convinced that he belonged in school. His self-sufficiency, his talent in art, and his interest in collecting botanical specimens prompted them to urge him on to school. At first Carver was inwardly recalcitrant: he remembered his first attempt to enter college; but after much persuading and encouraging from the Milhollands he gave in not only to their wish but also to what he realized was the wish in his heart.

His goal was Simpson College. There the climb upward began anew but not without its share of unpleasantness. His matriculation caused murmuring among the students; moreover his walk-

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## BOOKSHELF

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ing among them caused icy comment. Though there was coldness shown him his superiority as a student soon won him respect which opened the way to later friendships. Always, despite the treatment shown and the manner expressed to him, he remained the same quiet independent person not disdainful of having to do laundry to meet some of his debts but inwardly proud that he was becoming educated. At first his principal interest had been art; but though he had done well in this, science seemed the more substantial to work in as a career. Upon the suggestion of his friend and art teacher, Miss Budd, he focused his attention upon botany more purposefully. Necessarily he had to expand his knowledge of that field, and so off he went to Ames where once again he excelled as a student and where upon graduating he remained for a while as an assistant in the botany department.

Soon after, Carver was destined to answer the call of the young educator, Booker T. Washington, who had established a college for negroes. It was there in Alabama at Tuskegee Institute that Carver completed his many experiments with the peanut and the sweet potato; it was there that his extensive work in mycological research proved a benefit to the farmer; it was there that he unknowingly contributed his life as an example to his race and to the world.

Much interesting material has been assembled by Mrs. Holt in this book. She spent a period of four years gathering unknown facts through many sources. As a result of her work we have an inspiring and provocative book, one which serves as an excellent remedy for a discouraged yet energetic person.



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